

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 ICAE-00  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00  
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /058 W  
-----029389 101706Z /53

O R 101604Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1179

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY BELIZE

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 3792

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, MPOL, HO

SUBJ: PUBLIC REACTION TO MELGAR REMOVAL

REF: (A) TEGUCIGALPA 3744, (B) STATE 200321, (C) TEGUCIGALPA 3597

1. SUMMARY: POLITICAL AND OTHER REACTION CONTINUES TO VIEW CALMLY GENERAL MELGAR'S REMOVAL. MOST COMMENTARY EMPHASIZES THE ARMED FORCES CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO ELECTIONS. MELGAR WAS GENERALLY CONSIDERED A DECENT PERSON, BUT HE WAS RECOGNIZABLE THE ARMED FORCES APPOINTEE AND IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, WHEN HE LOST THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL'S SUPPORT, HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO COMPLY OR BE REMOVED. END SUMMARY.

2. POLITICAL PARTY SPOKEWMEN AND OTHER PROMINENT PERSONALITIES CONTINUE TO REACT TO REMOVAL OF GENERAL MELGAR WITH EQANIMITY. THERE SEEMS WIDESPREAD ROCOGNITION THAT AS AN APPOINTMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES SUPERIOR COUNCIL HIS REMOVAL WAS INTERNAL MATTER OF THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY. TEGUCIGALPA REMAIN CALM AND NORMAL.  
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3. MOST COMMENTARY HAS FOCUSED ON THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNIQUE'S PROMISE OF RESPECT FOR THE SCHEDULED ELECTORAL PROCESS, FIND-ING THIS TO BE SUFFICIENT REASSURANCE IN ORDER TO ACCEPT THE CHANGE. THE COMPOSITION OF THE JUNTA ITSELF SEEMS OF SECONDARY INTEREST. LIBERAL PARTY SPOKESMEN (PLH) HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT MORE PLEASED THAN THOSE OF THE OTHER PARTIES BECAUSE OF THEIR BELIEF

GENERAL MELGAR WAS TO BE THE NATIONAL PARTY (PNH) CANDIDATE. ONLY CARLOS ROBERTO REINA HAS EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN OVER WHAT THE CHANGE MIGHT MEAN, BUT HE ALSO HAS EXPRESSED PLEASURE THE ELECTORAL PROCESS WILL CONTINUE. ON THE OTHER HAND, PNH LEADERS HAVE TOLD EMBOFFS THAT MELGAR HAD SOUGHT AN AGREEMENT WITH THE PNH BUT THAT CONVERSATIONS WERE NOT PROFITABLE. THEIR ASSUMPTION WAS MELGAR WOULD THEN BE SEEKING ANOTHER VEHICLE THROUGH WHICH TO CONTINUE IN POWER. THE RESULT BEING THAT NEITHER OF THE TWO MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES HAS ANY REGRETS OVER MELGAR'S REMOVAL.

4. LABOR AND CAMPESINO LEADERS, PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN AND OTHERS HAVE BEEN MORE CAUTIOUS IN PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS, BUT THE GENERAL IMPRESSION IS ACCEPTANCE OF THE NEW ORDER.

T. COMMENT: MELGAR WAS GENERALLY CONSIDERED WELL INTENTIONED, HARD WORKING AND SERIOUSLY CONCERNED WITH HONDURAS' PROGRESS. HIS APPARENT POPULARITY WAS FOR THAT, AND ACCRUED BECAUSE HE WAS THE CHIEF OF STATE, BUT WAS NOT BASED UPON INDEPENDENT SOURCES OF POWER THAT COULD PROVOKE A REAL REACTION IN HIS FAVOR. PUBLIC REACTION HAS TAKEN THE CHANGE CALMLY. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, MELGAR WAS THE CREATURE OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL WHICH HAD APPOINTED HIM. WHEN HE LOST THE COUNCIL'S SUPPORT THERE WAS REALLY NO POSSIBILITY HE WOULD DO OTHER THAN SUBMIT TO ITS DEMANDS OR BE REMOVED.  
JARAMILLO

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**TAGS:** PGOV, PINT, MPOL, SOPN, HO, (MELGAR CASTRO, JUAN ALBERTO)  
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